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ABSTRACT

Despite Dewey's influence on educational thought, those with progressive visions of democratic education are generally on the margins of educational policy and practice. One notable exception was the "Eight-Year Study," a landmark attempt to design, implement, and evaluate democratic secondary schools. The Eight-Year Study was begun in 1930 by the Progressive Education Association (PEA) and the Commission on the Relation of School and College. It studied alternative programs in two school districts (Denver and Tulsa), 26 other schools, and 300 colleges and universities. A total of 1,475 students in alternative programs were matched with nonparticipants and interviewed over the next 8 years. Although the Eight-Year Study was important, it failed to bring progressive educational practices to U.S. high schools. Examination of this effort permits consideration of how democratic priorities can transform both educational practice and policy analysis. Specifically, this study demonstrates the norms, values, and technologies that guide mainstream analysis are poorly suited to record and report the strengths of the democratic orientation inspired by Dewey's work. (LMI)

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DEMOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND THE CONSTRAINING CULTURE OF MAINSTREAM POLICY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Despite Dewey's influence on educational thought, those with progressive visions of democratic education are generally on the margins of educational policy and practice. One notable exception was the "Eight-year Study" -- a landmark attempt to design, implement, and evaluate democratic secondary schools. Examination of this effort permits consideration of how democratic priorities can transform both educational practice and educational evaluation and policy analysis. In addition, studying the reactions of the mainstream policy community to this study, helps illuminate the constraints imposed by the culture of educational policy discussions. Specifically, it shows that the norms, values, and technologies which guide mainstream analysis are poorly suited to record and report the strengths of the democratic orientation inspired by Dewey's work.

Given educators' widespread rhetorical commitments to both democratic ideals and John Dewey's philosophy, it is striking that so little has been done to advance the links he made between democracy and educational practice. Some might explain this phenomenon by noting the considerable resistance of both parents and educators to movement away from traditional educational methods and goals. Others might focus on the tremendous demands Deweyan approaches place on practitioners and question whether teachers in very many schools possess the will, the resources, and the expertise needed to sustain such practices.

I wish to consider an alternative explanation. Can part of the problem facing reformers with democratic agendas be traced to the culture of educational policy discussions? Are the norms, values, and technologies which guide mainstream analysis of educational programs poorly suited to record and report the strengths of the democratic orientation inspired by Dewey's work?

For the most part, the educational policy community fails to pay systematic attention to Dewey's democratic commitments. To the extent that they acknowledge a link between democracy and education, they adopt a narrow political understanding of democracy, one that emphasizes the need for knowledgeable voters. For Dewey, in contrast, "democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living" (1916, p. 87). This way of life is characterized by numerous and varied shared interests among citizens and by "full and free ... interplay with other forms of association" (1916, p. 83).

Members of democratic communities share commitments to one another, to informed debate, and to experimentation. They seek a form of social harmony where individuals develop their interests and abilities while responding to social needs. For educators, the task is to create learning communities in schools which model these ideals.

How might one assess the alignment of these concerns with the culture of mainstream policy analysis? What data might be considered?

THE EIGHT-YEAR STUDY

In 1930 a group of the Nation's leading educators came together to discuss the promise of progressive educational practices. They were frustrated that progressive pedagogy and curriculum was rarely found in high schools. The chief obstacles, they believed, were college admission standards which emphasized particular academic courses and unit requirements. While recognizing the value of academic disciplines, progressive educators often found these requirements constraining.

If educators and students were freed from these unit requirements, could they create "democracy's high school" (Aikin 1942, p. 41)? While pursuing this goal, could they turn schools into places where "the common problems of American youth become the heart of the curriculum" (p. 57)? And if students pursued these alternative goals in high school, would they succeed in college?

These were the questions which motivated the Commission on the Relation of School and College to embark on the Eight-year Study. Carnegie, Rockefeller, and other foundations contributed over one million dollars to the Progressive Education Association (PEA) in search of an answer (Redefer 1950, p. 33). Two entire school districts (Denver and Tulsa) as well as 26 other schools (15 private) participated in the study. To enable experimentation, those conducting the study convinced over 300 colleges and universities (including virtually all selective colleges and universities) to wave standard course and unit requirements for applicants from these schools.

The PEA hoped to support and monitor this effort in three ways. First, they employed teams of noted curriculum specialists to work with local educators on the design and documentation of their practices. Among the reforms these educators pursued were many practices being advocated today including: school-based decision making, cooperative learning, schools-within-schools, interdisciplinary studies, service learning, and the recognition of multiple intelligences. As will become clear, however, both these reforms and their rational were somewhat different than current models because they were shaped by the reformers' commitment to forging democratic communities within schools.

To accompany these efforts, a staff of evaluators led by Ralph Tyler designed and implemented an alternative form of evaluation and policy analysis which assessed students' achievement of their schools' nontraditional goals. They

measured, for example, the degree to which these schools fostered "democratic character".

Finally, in an effort to determine the impact of this alternative approach on college performance, 1,475 students in these alternative programs were paired with nonparticipants who attended the same college, were of the same age, sex, and race, had the same scholastic aptitude scores, and came from similar homes and communities. These pairs of students were followed and sporadically interviewed throughout their college careers. Records of their academic performance, their attitudes towards school and life, and their participation in extracurricular activities were also analyzed and compared. The study, which lasted eight years, became one of the largest social science experiments of its day.

What can we learn from this effort to transform high school's in the United States?

The vision of democracy pursued in the Eight-year Study, its scale, its use of numerous practices which many reformers currently advocate, the reliance on alternative approaches to policy analysis, and its prominence as an effort at educational reform, all make this experiment a rare and valuable source of data. The PEA published five volumes (over 2,100 pages) to document the changes which occurred in the schools and their effects. Examination of this literature permits consideration of how adoption of this alternative set of goals can transform both

educational practice and the form and content of evaluation and policy analysis. In addition, examination of mainstream policy analysts' reactions to the Eight-year Study may be particularly revealing. Its size, the bold nature of its goals, as well as the involvement of prominent schools, elite students, and leading educational researchers all made it difficult for the mainstream policy community to either miss or dismiss its findings. A consideration of their reactions -- the criticisms, the silences, and the points of praise -- may help clarify the forces shaping, constraining, and organizing mainstream policy rhetoric.

A GRAND EXPERIMENT

The Commission on the Relation of School and College was created in October of 1930. The 26 members shared the belief that "Secondary education in the United States did not have a clear-cut, definite, central purpose" (Aikin 1942a, p. 4). They felt that schooling practices were largely a function of convention rather than reflection. Specifically, members of the Commission worried that "The student's concerns were not taken into account," and that, "The classroom was formal and completely dominated by the teacher." As a result, "The conventional high school curriculum was far removed from the real concerns of youth" (Aikin 1942a, p. 6-7). They also were troubled that "Our secondary schools did not prepare [students] adequately for the responsibilities of community life". They found that,

> little effort was made to lead youth into a clear

> understanding of the ideals of democracy [and that] not many [students] had developed any strong sense of social responsibility or deep concern for the common welfare (Aikin 4-5, p. 1942a).

For similar reasons they worried when "Only here and there did the Commission find principals who conceived of their work in terms of democratic leadership of the community, teachers, and students" (Aikin 1942a, p. 9-10).

Commission members wanted educational processes which 1) reflected students' interests and the particular needs of youth and 2) provided students with the skills and social orientation needed to foster democracy[1].

By the fall of 1933, 28 schools had been selected and had begun planning for change. To facilitate this planning and to support the project's development once it was underway, teacher development workshops were sponsored by the commission. These workshops were the first of their kind (Tyler, 1980). Differing local priorities, site leadership, and contextual issues (such as financial resources, pressures from parents, trustee priorities, and traditions) led to a wide range of experiences. Not surprisingly, the approach taken in a private school with thirty teachers and three hundred students was often different from that taken in a city school with 2,500 students and eighty teachers (see Aikin 1942a, p. 28). Still, the schools' common orientation, their sharing of ideas, and the centralized support they received from the PEA often led them to adopt similar goals

and comparable organizational and curricular strategies.

AN EXAMPLE: TULSA[2]

Tulsa's adaptation of these priorities was relatively typical. I highlight six features of their program to help clarify the kinds of curricular and organizational changes brought about by this experiment.

Small Schools and Schools Within Schools

It is important to note from the outset that only a portion of students in most of the public schools participated in the study. Participation was often limited to students of average or above average academic ability. This decision is partially explained by the Commission's desire to assess students' performance in college. Students with below average academic skills rarely went to college. The small size of these programs may have also made it easier to coordinate these changes and to develop coherent communities of students and teachers. In Tulsa a group of 200 tenth grade "accelerated" students were selected by their ninth grade teachers to participate in the experiment. They spent three hours each day in the "block" where they studied "Social Relations" (problems confronting tenth grade boys and girls) for two hours and one hour involved in either physical education or a creative activity such as music, woodworking, auto mechanics, or art. They then spent three hours taking electives.

Common School Goals

Given their new direction, explicit and thoughtful consideration of their alternative goals was very important. In Tulsa, a steering committee formed to address this concern. They adopted goals which reflected both humanistic and democratic priorities. They wanted: 1) "to develop those attitudes, skills, and understandings which will enable the individual, as a member of the social group concerned, to become a positive force in the process of achievement of the democratic ideal" and 2) "to develop an effective personality through an understanding of self, and through an appreciation of the importance of the aesthetic and the spiritual in human activities" (Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 93).

Core Curriculum

The committee then developed a core curriculum based on these priorities. This curriculum was to "meet the general education needs of all secondary school pupils and should be required of all pupils" (Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 94).[3] Participating students were assigned for three hours each day to core classrooms. In these classes students addressed topics in an interdisciplinary manner and they explored the significance of each issue for both individuals and the society. During a tenth grade unit on health, for example, students focused on questions which included "How do the different parts of my body work?" and "How does the community help me to keep

well?" (Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 336; Tulsa High Schools 1942, p. 645). In addition, both practical and theoretical questions were studied. During a unit on democracy, students were asked to consider how "democratic ideals and principles affected the history of government and political activities in the United States" and the question "how may I participate in government itself to promote processes of desirable evolutionary change?" (Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 336).

Teacher\Pupil Planning

Once these core curricular goals were specified, a process they referred to as teacher\pupil planning was brought into play. This procedure was used in Tulsa and elsewhere to strengthen the alignment of students' interests and needs with curricular content.

Reports from both evaluators and teachers on this strategy indicate that teachers encountered difficulties when they began using this approach, but that teacher/pupil planning proved to be a very effective way to bring a democratic way of life into the classroom. They found this process enhanced students' sense of self worth and led students to take greater responsibility for their own education. It also provided students with an opportunity to work collectively, under the supervision of the teacher, to reach decisions which reflected the varied interests and priorities of group members.

Given the many conceptions of pupil "empowerment" that appear in literature on educational democracy, it is important to note that these schools pursued teacher/pupil planning not pupil planning. Though students played an important role shaping the ways in which topics were explored, they did not control the process. The broad learning objectives were set by teachers and administrators. The specific curricular content was influenced by students' interests, but also by "the uniqueness of the local community, [by teachers' assessments of students needs], and [by] the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher" (Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 77). Ultimately, classroom teachers decided what would be taught[4].

Workplace Democracy

Just as the pursuit of democratic classrooms led teachers to greatly increase students' role in classroom decision making, attempts to promote democratic leadership in schools greatly increased the role teachers played in determining educational goals and in selecting policies to further those goals. In schools and districts where course content had previously been determined by superintendents and principals, faculty committees now played the leading role. In some schools all decisions which affected the school were discussed by the faculty or by faculty representatives. A few private schools created committees of teachers which helped draft budgets and determine teacher salaries.

Experience-Based Pedagogy

Small schools, increased teacher decision making authority, a core curriculum, and teacher/pupil planning, were found in almost all of the schools. These organizational changes were often combined with a pedagogical commitment to active, experiential learning environments. Progressive educators were attracted to this approach because it motivated students, reflected student preferences, provided opportunities for students to work together towards goals they collectively determined, integrated subject matter, and tied academic discussions to practical concerns and community priorities.

At Will Rogers High School in Tulsa, for example, students in one class discussed possible topics of study amongst themselves and with teachers in their program. They decided to spend several weeks studying the conservation of natural resources. As the process of teacher/pupil planning continued, students considered their priorities and interests. One student explains,

> We not only wanted to be made aware of the problems and the need for conservation, but we also wanted to make others aware of this need. Not in some remote part of the United States but right here in our own community. Knowing that people are more impressed by what they actually see than what they read or hear, we decided to make a movie of conservation problems in the community in and around Tulsa (in Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel

1942, p. 141-2).

The students then formed six committees each with a different focus: conservation of soil, water conservation, flood control, wild life conservation, conservation of minerals, and forest conservation. Then, before beginning their study, the class considered the

> behavior patterns, or changes we wanted brought about in our personal attitudes and skills. These behavior patterns included learning to work together in groups with maximum of efficiency ... learn[ing] cooperation in our work with each other [and learning] more about the problems facing our community (a student, in Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 141-2).

With these goals in mind, each committee researched their particular set of issues. In addition to using library materials to learn about geography, forestry, soil management etc., the students requested and then examined reading material from various government departments. The students also gathered information by visiting sites where conservation was taking place. They then wrote reports, made class presentations, and received feedback from the class and the instructors. As a next step, each committee wrote a movie script discussing their particular topic. A committee of students then formed to integrate these segments. For the culminating activity, the class shot a movie at various locations including the Grand River Dam, Lake Spavinaw, the C.C.C. camp at Broken Arrow, and Mohawk

Park (Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel 1942, p. 141-3).

This kind of experience-based project was the ideal that these schools pursued and in many cases created -- though clearly not on a daily basis. The attractiveness of this approach lay in the way it incorporated students' interests, examined a significant social issue, drew on students different abilities and ways of learning, and helped develop students' ability to collectively pursue shared goals.

AN EXAMPLE FROM DALTON

Because these experience-based projects reflected the environments in which the students lived, they took different forms in different communities. To provide a sense of this contrast, I describe a project which took place at The Dalton School, a private day school in New York City. Rather than placing the primary emphasis on social concerns, this project emphasized student emotional and creative growth as well as the development of important academic and life skills.

At Dalton, students did not passively discuss and reflect on childhood or talk about infant siblings, they worked in the school's nursery. Enrolled in a course titled "Nursery-Biology," each ninth grade girl (Dalton's high school was then a school for girls) spent a week working from 8:45 till 3:00 in the nursery. For the rest of the semester they were "free to use the babies as an 'observation laboratory'" (Dalton Schools 1942, p. 124).

Much of this curriculum focused on human biology in relation

to the nursery. In addition to learning how to care for young children, students working in the nursery kept daily records of the babies weight, temperature, and diet. They also studied issues relating to each child's health and physical development. This emphasis on scientific aspects of human biology was complemented by a focus on the social context of childhood in New York City. The students explored these issues by visiting the homes and the neighborhoods in which the children lived and by visiting institutions which serve children: New York Hospital, Borden Milk Plant, Yorkville Health Clinic, and the markets in Little Italy (see Dalton Schools 1942, p. 125). Finally, the topics covered in the course extended beyond the immediate issues related to child care. For example, students discussed human reproduction, puberty, and sex taboos. In addition, "psychological factors in family life are observed on visits to the babies homes, and are discussed in simple terms on return to the nursery" (Dalton Schools 1942, p. 127).

As these examples illustrate, by engaging students in active, experience-based projects, educators at the thirty schools found they could more effectively pursue their primary goals. Students needs and interests could help to shape the design of these endeavors. In addition, a democratic orientation and social mode of learning could be fostered by the content of the curriculum (students exposure to real world issues and experiences) and by the collective and democratic ways the groups of students carried out these activities.

TRANSFORMING POLICY ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

In many respects, the schools described above were innovative, relatively rare, and perhaps quite desirable. They were not, however, the first of their kind. Progressive high schools like this had been created before.

Why, then, the focus on the Eight-year Study? Why did Lawrence Cremin write that this commission "may well remain as the [Progressive Education] Association's abiding contribution to the development of American education." (1961, p. 251)? What justification did Ralph Tyler have for labeling the study one of "the five most significant curriculum events in the twentieth century" (1986/87, p. 36)?

Prior to the Eight-year Study, those striving to create progressive high schools aimed to better serve the students in their classes. They may have recognized that they were part of a movement, but their primary goal was local. The Progressive Education Association's study, in contrast, was designed to transform educational practice in the United States. They wanted to move progressive approaches from the margins to the mainstream.

To accomplish this task, the architects of the Eight-year Study recognized that they needed to create measures of educational outcomes which reflected their alternative priorities. They were concerned that educators, rather than measuring what they cared about, often cared about what they could measure.

> Because instruments of appraisal in [these alternative] areas ha[d] not been available, the teacher tends to neglect other objectives and to strive only for results that can be ascertained with relative ease and objectivity (Aikin 1942c, p. xviii).

By developing methods of policy analysis and evaluation which aligned with progressive educators' alternative priorities, these reformers hoped to provide incentives and direction which would lead practitioners to alter their practices.

The challenge they faced was substantial. Prior to the study, assessments of policy and of educational outcomes did not include systematic consideration of the goals these progressives valued. Rather than assessing the formation of democratic character or students' development, there was a

> universal emphasis upon the accumulation of credits for promotion, graduation, and admission to college... To pass a course [a student] must remember certain facts and show proficiency in certain skills. Therefore, remembering knowledge and practicing techniques for examinations become the purposes of education for pupils and teachers alike (Aikin 1942c, p. xvii).

If the need for new means of assessing school success was clear, however, the solution wasn't. Evaluators felt confident when assessing students' knowledge of particular subjects, students' academic skills, and the number of units they received. Could similarly satisfying methods be developed to assess the

alternative goals progressives emphasized? It was one thing to note that "unselfish devotion to great causes was not a characteristic result of secondary education" (1942a, p. 10) and quite another thing to measure in a systematic and convincing way the impact of pedagogy and curriculum on the development of democratic character among students.

In what follows, I examine their strategies for evaluating the development of "social sensitivity". The focus of this component of their evaluation aligns well with Dewey's democratic agenda. After considering the strengths and weaknesses of these measures, I consider the reactions of mainstream analysts to the conclusions reached by the evaluators of the Eight-year Study. These responses are not particularly positive and they help to explain the project's limited impact.

While recognizing that numerous factors account for the limited impact of the Eight-year Study, I then focus on the culture of mainstream policy analysis. Specifically, I argue that norms and values embedded in the structure of mainstream analytic conventions conflict with the priorities and practices of educators with democratic agendas. I conclude that those hoping to promote the kind of schooling which inspired the Eight-year Study need to work on ways to alter the analytic conventions of the mainstream policy community so as to build a more receptive climate for their alternative priorities.

MEASURING DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER BY ASSESSING SOCIAL SENSITIVITY

The Committee was strongly committed to Dewey's vision of democracy as a way of life and to developing students orientation towards social needs. As they worked to develop means of assessing the achievement of these goals, they decided that assessing students "social sensitivity" was of prime importance. After extensive conversations with teachers, the evaluators identified six "major aspects of social sensitivity of concern to teachers in the thirty schools" (Taba and McGuire 1942, p. 161).

> 1. Social thinking e.g., the ability (a) to get significant meanings from social facts, (b) to apply social facts and generalizations to new problems, (c) to respond critically .... to ideas and arguments...
> 2. Social attitudes, beliefs, and values; e.g., the basic personal positions, feelings, and concerns toward social phenomena, institutions, and issues...
> 3. Social awareness; that is, the range and quality of factors or elements perceived in a situation...
> 4. Social interests as revealed by liking to engage in socially significant activities...
> 5. Social information; that is, familiarity with facts and generalizations relevant to significant social problems...
> 6. Skill in social action, involving familiarity with the techniques of social action as well as the ability to use them (p. 161).

With these goals in mind, a variety of tests were created.

One test demanded that students assess the accuracy and appropriateness of using different social facts and generalizations to support or critique a given policy direction. A different test aimed to classify the students' beliefs on social issues. This test asked students to indicate their agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty with over 200 statements relating to six different social issues: democracy, economic relations, labor and unemployment, race, nationalism, and militarism.

I will focus on a third and relatively representative kind of test. Students taking this exam were presented with a problematic situation and required to select one of three possible courses of action. They then choose justifications for this action from a list of "reasons". For example, students might read a brief description of the connection between working in mines and factories and the development of debilitating health conditions. They are told that improving these conditions can be quite expensive and then asked, "what should be done about such problems" (Taba and McGuire 1942, p. 180)?

Students choose from one of three possible courses of action. The first, which the answer key tells us reflects "undemocratic" values, is to let the mine and factory owners decide what to do. The second, the "democratic" answer, is to have the government institute "minimum standards for general working conditions". And the third, labeled a "compromise", is to have joint committees of workers and employers make

suggestions regarding improvements. Students then review twenty reasons which may or may not support the stance they have taken. They choose the reasons they would use to support the course of action they have already selected. Those scoring this part of the test note both whether the reasons selected are consistent with the course of action proposed and whether these reasons reflect democratic values, undemocratic values, or rationalizations. One possible reason, for example, is "Without regulation, business can be depended upon to make necessary improvements." This answer is said to reflect undemocratic values and to be consistent with the first and third courses of action. (See Appendix A for sample test questions and answers).

This test aimed to answer three kinds of questions. First, "How broadly does the pupil relate principles or value generalizations to chosen courses of action?" An answer to this question can be attained by examining columns 1-4 of Appendix B. Second, can the student construct well reasoned arguments? The score in column 5 lists "the percent of the total number of reasons checked by the student which are inconsistent with the course of action chosen" (Taba and McGuire 1942, p. 186). Column 6 provides the number of reasons used "which are contrary to commonly known facts" and column 7 list the number of reasons used which have no connection to the matter at hand. Lastly, the test seeks to answer the question, "What values are dominant among the courses of action and reasons chosen by the student?" As noted above, each action and reason has been designated as

either democratic, undemocratic, a compromise, or a rationalization. Columns 8-13 simply record the distribution of the actions and reasons selected.

SOME LIMITS OF THESE EXAMS

The detail provided in the test result summary overstates the potential of this measurement strategy. Their standardized objective method of scoring fails to capture the complexity and ambiguity inherent in deliberation of social issues. The structure of these tests implies that individuals committed to democracy would all recommend similar actions when faced with the same dilemmas. Clearly, this is not the case. Analysts who share a commitment to democratic values often reach different policy conclusions. Those with democratic values might share a commitment to freedom of speech, for example, but they could easily adopt different understandings of the implications of this commitment. The designers of this exam rule out this possibility. Their approach also fails to offer guidance in cases where two or more "democratic" values are in conflict.

Not only are the test designers inattentive to these complexities, they also, and without explanation, basically define democratic behavior or values as those which coincide with a left of center political ideology. For example, the statement "Since employers have to bear the expense of making improvements in working conditions, they should have a voice in deciding what changes should be made" is labeled "undemocratic" (Taba and

McGuire 1942, p. 181).

My point here is not that those designing this test should have adopted more "objective" categorization schemes. I want to question the notion that objective assessments of specific policies as "democratic" or "undemocratic" can be made. Once important and complex questions are raised, distinctions between democratic and undemocratic values blur. There is not a single "democratic" answer to a given problematic situation. As they worked to formulate objective understandings of democratic and undemocratic values, those who designed this test neglected the complexity of the goal they pursued. When thinking about curriculum and when working with students they understood democracy to be a way of life -- a mode of interaction which attends to social needs, the free and full interplay among individuals, informed debate, and experimentation. This conception placed great emphasis on the decision making process and on social relations among classmates. It also acknowledged the impossibility of pre-specifying the desirable outcome of social inquiry. These tests, in contrast, defined "democracy" in accordance with a liberal political ideology and implied that a democratic orientation has specifiable policy implications[5].

THESE TESTS HAD MANY STRENGTHS

Despite these problems, the test described above and the others which accompanied it clearly represent a dramatic departure from mainstream testing practices and a thoughtful

first step towards assessment of their ambitious goal. These tests measured more than students' knowledge of economics, history, or politics. They also assessed students' ability to apply such understandings in varied contexts and they recorded the value orientation students used when responding to particular social problems.

As a result, these tests could be used in a variety of ways. If given by a teacher at the beginning of a year, the tests could be used "to **diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals in his class**" (Taba and McGuire 1942, p. 240, their emphasis). Did students use economic generalizations with accuracy? Were they frequently swayed by slogans rather than by logical arguments? Did students use a consistent set of values to guide their conclusions?

If given towards the end of a year or after a unit which focused students' attention on these concerns, the tests could also help a teacher "**check the effectiveness of his curriculum** (their emphasis, 240). Could students employ social facts and generalizations with accuracy when considering responses to particular social problems? Were the values implicit in their reasoning consistent or did they vary with the topic? As noted earlier, much of the curricular change pushed by participating schools aimed to promote "social sensitivity". These tests could be used to assess whether "First-hand exploration of the community and use of literary material to illustrate social problems [or] democratic processes in administering school

affairs [developed] personal democratic attitudes" (p. 241).[6]

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The Commission evaluators hoped to demonstrate that concerns such as the development of democratic character could become a meaningful focus for policy analysts. As a result, they used the traditional criteria of reliability and validity to assess their measures of alternative outcomes such as social sensitivity.

> The usefulness of this instrument, as of any instrument, is determined by (1) how adequately it measures what it sets out to measure [validity] and (2) how reliable a particular set of the students' responses is likely to be (Taba and McGuire 1942, p. 190).

For example, when assessing their tests of social sensitivity, they tested the consistency of students scores with the students behavior (as reported by teachers). They also transcribed detailed interviews with forty-five students which focused on the same issues the tests aimed to measure. A panel of four judges then considered whether the answers students provided during these lengthy interviews corresponded to the answers students provided on the exam. In addition, the evaluators carefully judged whether the impressions left by the particular method of scoring and summarizing test results adequately conveyed the findings of the particular exams. Finally, they checked to make sure that their exams measured students' values and their ability

to apply social facts and generalizations and were not simply measures of "general intelligence". Forty-five students took the American Council Psychological Examination to see whether the measure of intelligence provided by this test correlated with scores students received on the test of social sensitivity. After extensive study and some revision of exams based on the results, the committee concluded "that this test has sufficient validity and reliability to be a useful instrument for diagnosis" (p. 197).

REACTIONS OF MAINSTREAM ANALYSTS

In many respects, the work of these evaluators was both path breaking and monumental. They designed, tested, and then implemented dozens of evaluation instruments which assessed the achievement of numerous goals which had never before been systematically studied by policy analysts. The documentation of these evaluators' efforts fill volumes.

Despite their work, however, this attempt to craft an alternative form of policy analysis was ignored by mainstream educational analysts and the popular press. Even their development of alternative curriculum and school organization received little systematic attention. Whether in newspapers, popular magazines, or in academic journals, commentaries on the Eight-year Study focused on the performance of participating students in college and on the implications of this study for college entrance requirements. Benjamin Fine (1942), for

example, wrote a lengthy article on the study for the New York Times. He briefly mentions the Commission's conclusion "that secondary schools re-evaluate their curricula and discard many of the artificial barriers that now separate various subject areas" (p. 5). However, other than this and two other similarly vague sentences describing the curricular changes associated with the study, the entire article focuses on these students' performance in college and on the desirability of particular college entrance requirements. Similarly, debates surrounding the study's value which appeared in journals for educators generally included a few vague references to the alternative curricula of the participating schools' and then provided extensive detail on the findings regarding the students' performance in college. The alternative forms of evaluation and policy analysis developed by the Commission were not discussed at all (See, for example, Lancelot, 1943; 1945; Tyler, 1944; Johnson, 1946; 1950; 1951; Diederich, 1951).

THE PART OF THE STUDY WHICH GOT ATTENTION

Did they succeed in college? This was the question on which mainstream analysts focused. To test the impact of progressive approaches, 1,475 students from participating schools "were matched on the basis of sex, age, race, scholastic aptitude scores, home and community background, interests, and probable future" with similar students who had prepared in traditional ways for college (Aikin 1942a, p. 109). These students were

periodically interviewed regarding their sense of their social and political orientation and their psychological adjustment to college life. In addition, records of their grades, academic honors, and extra curricular activities were taken.

A great deal was riding on this evaluation. Some proponents viewed the study as "an unnecessary and dangerous innovation" and some critics were pleased that "Progressive Education now had enough rope to hang itself" (Aikin 1942a, p. 23-4). The results were "a bit of an anticlimax for everybody concerned" (McConn, 1942, p. xx). When compared with similar students from traditional high schools, students from participating schools "earned a slightly higher total grade average," "received slightly more academic honors in each year," and were slightly more likely to participate in artistic, theatrical, and musical extracurricular activities (Chamberlin, et al. 1942, p. 207). Their grades in foreign languages and their rates of participation in religious groups, social service activities, and organized sports were all slightly lower. These differences were generally between one and four percentage points.

The most convincing evidence that progressive schools were more "effective" came from comparisons of the success of students from the six most experimental schools with that of the students from the six least experimental schools. Researchers found that "the graduates of the most experimental schools were strikingly more successful than their matches" while "there were no large or consistent differences between the least experimental graduates

and their comparison group" (Aikin 1942b, p. 142-3). Students from the most experimental schools had grade averages of 2.72, while their control group had averages of 2.60. In comparison, students from the least experimental schools had grade averages of 2.27, while their control group had averages of 2.28 (Chamberlin et al. 1942, p. 166). Similarly, only 21 percent of the students from the most experimental schools were judged "essentially selfish", as compared with 28 percent of the control group. 41 percent of the students from both the least experimental group and their control group were judged "essentially selfish" (Chamberlin et al. 1942, p. 169).

REACTIONS AND DEBATES AMONG EDUCATORS

It is often easiest to tell what people care about by looking at what they choose to contest. I had expected the Commission's alternative agenda to be met with critiques on many levels. Should schools really focus on democracy as a way of life? Were the measures proposed for student interests and social sensitivity reasonable? Does teacher/pupil planning undermine teacher's authority or the ability to focus students' attention in productive ways?...

As it turned out, these issues were generally ignored by those who criticized the study. Despite the meager differences identified in the evaluation, the critiques of the evaluation of the Eight-year Study focused almost entirely on the Commission's method for assessing student achievement of mainstream goals in

college.

W. H. Lancelot (1943) initiated debate on the Eight-year Study with a front page article in the journal School and Society. Though he agreed that students from the progressive schools slightly outperformed those with which they were paired, he questioned the conclusion that these differences can be attributed to progressive techniques. Instead, he argued that students in the participating schools were more successful because they had attended better funded schools. This money attracted more talented teachers and enabled smaller classes[7].

Several months later, Ralph Tyler (1944) responded. He said that careful analysis of their data revealed that the participating schools were not better funded than their counterparts and did not have smaller classes.

Lancelot was not convinced. In 1945, he wrote "the Eight-year Study still awaits fair appraisal". He criticized the study's authors for not making their data available to the public and stated that his own estimates did not align with the data Tyler presented. Moreover, he complained that

> the voice of the advocate rings out so shrill and clear -- and so often -- throughout the report that attitudes of weariness and even of resistance are set up in the minds of thoughtful open-minded readers" (p. 282).

Though aggressive, this exchange was more respectful than much of the dialogue between progressives and their critics. Some who criticized the Eight-year Study could hardly contain

their contempt for progressive education. Helmer G. Johnson labeled the Eight-year Study "nothing but a hoax and a fraud" (1950, p. 339). In a series of articles (1946, 1950, 1951) he outlined methodological problems caused by selection bias, regression to the mean, and their use of aptitude test scores. He presented evidence indicating that the matched pairs of students may have been created in ways which made it likely that students from participating schools were slightly more talented than those with whom they were matched.

Frankly, his analysis does not justify his conclusion that "The procedure used in the Eight-year Study... marks a new low in the quality of present-day educational research (1951, p. 42). Accompanying his systematic discussion of methodological issues are numerous statements which demonstrate his contempt for progressive practices.

> If we must have such things as ineffective, disorderly Progressive education, the writer suggests that it be limited to the lowest 25 percent in intelligence where it will do little harm and that the rest of the pupils be given the opportunity to benefit from a stimulating, practical, well-balanced standard curriculum" (Johnson 1950, p. 339).

The tone and target of these exchanges tell us as much as their substance. Those who attacked the Eight-year Study never carefully engaged the Committee's alternative priorities. They focused on the part of the study which was probably the least

methodologically vulnerable. Instead of offering a systematic critique of the Commission's ability to assess students' democratic character or their personal and social adjustment, critics of the study sought to undermine the evidence on college success. They adopted this focus despite the fact that the differences noted in the study were very small (Chauncey 1941 was an exception). Perhaps of equal importance, those who defended the study never challenged their critics' exclusive focus on traditional concerns. Rather than arguing that judgments regarding the success of their project demanded attention to more than the impact of their schools on students' academic performance in college, they argued that their measures of this performance were accurate.

LOOKING BACK ON THE EIGHT-YEAR STUDY

In many respects, the Eight-year Study was remarkable. It fostered dozens of innovative educational approaches which both students and teachers found rewarding. In the process, the project broke new and important ground by demonstrating the feasibility and desirability of such practices as site based management, teacher/pupil planning, and teacher development workshops. With regard to evaluation and policy analysis, it signaled the arrival of numerous new approaches to evaluation and documentation. It represented the first large-scale effort to appraise schools by analyzing "questionnaires, observations, and samples of products, as well as tests" (Tyler 1980, p. 32).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this study provides reformers with the first step towards a still unrealized goal. Those committed to progressive education can learn much from the Study's accomplishments, from the barriers which limited success, and from the spirit which energized the movement.

DEMOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND THE CULTURE OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS

Though an important event for numerous reasons, the Eight-year study failed to accomplish its primary goal. It failed to bring progressive educational practices to the nation's high schools and it failed to change the form and focus of policy deliberations.

The most profound signal of the Study's limited ability to transform practice comes from Frederick Redefer. In 1950 he surveyed the participating schools and found that only "[t]wo of the fifteen schools reporting attested that some of the 'spirit' of the Eight-year Study remained" (p. 35). As one headmaster put it "The strong breeze of the Eight-year Study has passed and now we are getting back to fundamentals" (in Redefer 1950, p. 35).

The study's impact on the policy community was also slight. The book summarizing the study sold only 6,400 copies and the volume documenting the changes which took place in each of the thirty schools sold fewer than 1,000 copies. When a group of participants gathered eight years after the end of the study in 1950, they concluded "that the evaluation program introduced by the Eight-year Study had been forgotten" and that "college

entrance requirements had been tightened with too few admission officers aware of the results of the study" (Redefer 1950, p. 34).

How might one explain this outcome? The scale of the experiment, the status of those involved, and the generally positive findings were not enough to bring change. Why? Many attribute this result to World War II (see Cremin 1961; Aikin 1953). The study ended in 1942, the explanation goes, and attention was focused elsewhere.

In many respects, this explanation is surely correct -- but a broader explanation is needed as well. While it was clearly difficult to build public support for a more progressive approach to education in the midst of the second world war, educators, academics, and policy analysts certainly could have paid greater attention to this study. They could have debated the desirability of altering their practices. At the very least, the participating schools could have maintained their experimental programs. With the end of the war, many practices which had been placed on hold, resumed. The war in and of itself is not sufficient to explain the modest impact of the Eight-year Study.

Another contributing, and perhaps more fundamental, factor responsible for the difficulties faced by proponents of the Eight-year Study concerns the culture of mainstream policy analysis. I believe that one central lesson of the Eight-year Study is that the norms, values, and technologies of mainstream policy analysis are poorly suited to record, report, and promote

the desirable aspects of progressive educational efforts.

First, the values and priorities of mainstream policy analysts differ dramatically from those of progressive educators. As a result of these values, many benefits of progressive practices receive little attention from policy analysts. I am not referring only to critics like Helmer Johnson who believe that progressive techniques reject the most sacred traditional educational values. Many analysts and much public sentiment is more charitable. However, while many are relatively tolerant of these alternative approaches, their analysis rarely focuses on progressive goals. Consequently, mainstream analysts were not particularly concerned with either the alternative assessment strategies developed by the Commission or with the results of these new tests. They focused on the academic college performance of the study's participants. For those running the Eight-year Study, in contrast, ensuring college performance was a constraint -- not the ultimate goal.

Second, just as the goals of mainstream analysts often align poorly with those of progressive educators, the means of assessing -- the conventions and technologies of policy analysis -- are often inappropriate for evaluating the attainment of progressive priorities. As became apparent during the discussion of the Commission's effort to assess students' social sensitivity, standardized, objective, and decontextualized measures can take analysts only so far. The schools understood democratic processes to emphasize informed public deliberation,

concern for fellow citizens, and the development of individual priorities and interests which reflect the needs of the community. Concern for reliability and validity can help in the design of useful measures, but the value of this "scientific" criteria for assessments of "democratic character", is ultimately constrained by the subjective and context dependent nature of democratic behavior. The objective standards mainstream policy analysts seek can generally not consider all that is relevant. There is a tension between the creation of precise numeric measures of democratic character and the creation of meaningful measures.

Third, findings on these matters are also very difficult to report. Mainstream analysts currently lack the language and set of conceptual categories needed to succinctly articulate student progress with respect to these democratic goals. The chart (Appendix B) succeeds in providing some useful information about a given student's values and knowledge base -- but the complex nature of the format would make using this data to evaluate macro-level policy concerns quite difficult.

Fourth, the culture of mainstream policy analysis also reflects the preferences of those who work in bureaucracies (See Swidler 1982 for a related argument). These clients of policy analysts want clearly specified goals and means to promote those goals. A progressive educational orientation, however, is often at odds with this desire. Indeed, progressive methods of evaluation and policy analysis, by making their subjective nature

explicit and by asking teachers to make context dependent judgments, threaten bureaucrats and policy analysts whose claim to legitimacy is rooted in their scientific approach. Moreover, these methods and the values they reflect will often conflict with analysts' desire to make standardized comparisons and issue bureaucratic mandates. Progressive priorities regarding individual development and the promotion of democratic social relations, for example, are often best approached indirectly. Bureaucracies can mandate that students receive lessons on human decency or on the value of free and full discussions among community members, but these and other goals are better approached through a process Dewey (1938, p. 48) labels collateral learning. They are achieved indirectly, through students' experiences studying other issues and through their other experiences in school and out.

Much of the motivation behind teacher\pupil planning and the cooperative experience-based curriculum which was described earlier, for example, reflected these progressive ideals. Such approaches require that teachers make judgments which reflect the particular setting as well as students' interests and needs. As a result, this curriculum cannot be mass produced. Moreover, processes such as teacher\pupil planning and experience-based curriculum lead to outcomes which often cannot be specified in advance. This places policy analysts, evaluators, and bureaucrats in a difficult, or at least new, position. They must find ways to design and assess programs without granting primacy

to a predetermined set of goals or methods so as to secure space for practitioners' professional judgment on these matters[8]. In some ways, the current emphasis on teacher professionalism and site-based decision making may support this agenda. However, since many analysts and policy makers, like the authors of America 2000, speak of providing "flexibility in exchange for accountability" the potential for these reforms will hinge in large part on the notions of accountability which are adopted (Department of Education, 1991, 2).

REASONS FOR HOPE

Noting the lack of alignment between the culture of mainstream policy analysis and progressive educational approaches is different than accepting this state of affairs. The norms, values, and technologies of policy analysts do change. Consequently, at the same time that those with progressive agendas must recognize the constraints mainstream norms may place on their efforts, they must simultaneously look for opportunities to promote their alternative concerns. Fortunately, the greatly enhanced status of qualitative policy research, the emerging commitment to school-based decision making and to empowering practitioners, the current emphasis on constructivist approaches, the burgeoning interest in authentic assessment, and the recognition of multiple intelligences, all reflect opportunities for policy analysts with this nontraditional orientation[9].

It is possible to build on these reforms in ways which

support democratic educational priorities. Indeed, a form of policy analysis which systematically attends to students' social values as reflected in their behavior and in their analysis of social issues could provide those with progressive priorities both incentives and direction. Similarly, paradigms for policy analysis which assess whether a particular curriculum helps students confront prominent social issues while also helping them develop in accordance with their particular interests, abilities, and needs might prove quite valuable.

It is also important for analysts to remember that support for a democratic educational mission is firmly rooted in our culture.

> Education for democracy cannot merely be taken for granted. What goes on in the schools every hour of the day, on the playground and in the classroom, whether reflecting methods of control by the teacher, or opportunities for self-expression by pupils, must be checked against the fact that children are growing up to live in a democracy. That the schools make worthy citizens is the most important responsibility placed upon them (in Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 1992, p. 85).

Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote this in 1939. Three years later, a five volume report on the Eight-year Study was published. This privately funded, national effort, begun in the midst of the Great Depression, had little impact on educational policy.

Joseph Featherstone reminds us that "progressive" educators are often ignorant of their own history. Living in what he calls the "United States of Amnesia," these educators continually struggle to develop clear conceptions of their goals, appropriate educational practices, and strategies to promote their alternative agenda (1992, p. ix). The Eight-year Study provides a place from which others might begin. It also offers a sense of the obstacles policy analysts and other reformers may encounter on the journey. In doing so, it highlights the constraints imposed by the culture of mainstream policy analysis.

NOTES

1. These reformers were also deeply concerned with students academic progress. They worried, for example, that "The high school seldom challenged the student of first-rate ability to work up to the level of his intellectual powers" (Aiken 1942a, p. 5) and that "Most high school graduates were not competent in the use of the English language" (p. 8). Their primary focus, however, was on responding to students' needs and on creating democratic communities.

2. The descriptions of schools and practices which follow are illustrative rather than comprehensive. As with any large effort, some schools were more successful and innovative than others. My goal is to provide a sense of some of the most democratic features of these schools.

3. The rhetoric used by educators in Tulsa and the other schools may imply a commitment to equal treatment, but the practices of these schools will probably strike today's readers as grossly inadequate. Tulsa's schools, for example, were segregated. There were three public high schools for whites and a separate school for blacks (Thirty Schools 1942, p. 643).

4. As Giles, McCutchen, and Zechiel (1942) point out, however, "Each pupil, of course, makes the decision as to what will be learned" (p. 77).

5. These tests also highlight an issue which demonstrates some of the structural constraints on educators with progressive agendas. Some of the exams included questions about racial segregation and tracking systems. The answer key indicates that the "democratic" response is to support integration and heterogeneous grouping. As noted earlier, however, most of the schools these students attended were racially segregated and, for the most part, only students who were judged to have above average ability participated in the study. This comment is not meant to belittle the efforts of these reformers. It is, however, extremely important to recognize the ways in which the work of thoughtful and committed reformers is often compromised by external social pressures.

6. The Committee's assessments of democratic character also focused on students' behavior (see Bulletin No. 1, "Anecdotal Records", 1935). Attention to students' behavior was important for two related reasons. First, one gains a clearer sense of the way students analyze facts and make decisions when the decisions have real consequences. For example, a great deal could be learned by examining the ways students responded to the plight of families facing poverty because of the depression that could not be learned by reading students' abstract commentaries on poverty.

Second, if democracy is a way of life and if "the clear

consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications, constitutes the idea of democracy" (Dewey 1927, p. 149), then those assessing a school's impact on students values need to assess the ways in which students interact while at school. Analysts interested in assessing the development of democratic character need to watch the ways in which students confront challenges. Do they work alone, do they compete, do they help one another?

Recognizing the need to study behavior, teachers at the thirty schools compiled anecdotal records. These records were designed to be used by individual teachers or by teams of teachers interested in reflecting on these concerns and on the impact of school organization and pedagogy on students' behavior. The records could also be used to monitor the behavior of individual students or classes over time.

7. Though the bulk of the article focused on these mainstream issues, Lancelot included one paragraph in which he praised the pedagogical and curricular innovations promoted by the Commission. The "five-volume report of the study contains so many stimulating suggestions and ingenious solutions of vital educational problems," he wrote, "that we should be extremely tolerant toward its imperfections" (p. 451).

8. This raises an additional issue as well. Bureaucrats are not the only ones who would be threatened by allowing teachers and students more freedom to make context dependent judgments regarding curriculum in light of their own assessments of student and community needs. As Tyack (1974), Callahan (1962), and others point out, those with political and economic power often use centralized bureaucratic structures to advance their own agendas. While this observation does not negate the constraints imposed by various features of the culture of policy analysis, it does underscore the fact that this culture is one of a number of factors which limit the spread of democratic education.

9. Of course some reforms, such as attempts to institute high stakes standardized accountability mechanisms, may promote norms which make the pursuit of this progressive democratic agenda more difficult. Similarly, colleges in many states have recently made explicit attempts to tie standardized course and unit requirements to admissions standards in an effort to bring about changes in high school curriculum.

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